

READING COMPREHENSION

Read the text carefully. Then complete the task on the next page.

The Black Mambas

“We’re called the Black Mambas because the black mamba snake is very active, very dangerous, it’s amazing and beautiful,” says Leitah Mkhabela, supervisor of the planet’s first all-female anti-poaching unit. “We’re telling the world that we are active, and we are dangerous to someone who wants to kill the animals we protect. We’re beautiful; we don’t use guns, but we use knowledge and education to teach people to stop poaching.”

The Black Mambas unit was established in 2013 to protect the wildlife of the Greater Kruger National Park, an area hit worse by rhinoceros poaching than anywhere else on earth. Their mission was to combat poaching by non-violent means. By recruiting and training women from rural communities – who have traditionally been primary caregivers and the source of morals and ethics to their families – the initiative focuses on community engagement and proactive, unarmed patrolling.

The unit’s approach was revolutionary, challenging traditional, male-dominated anti-poaching efforts. Without guns, the Black Mambas have achieved a 63 per cent reduction in poaching incidents in their area of operation. Their success has made Leitah and the Black Mambas world famous, generating headlines and attracting celebrity admirers from around the globe. “I love the exposure. I’ve met Prince William because I’m a ranger,” says Leitah, who doesn’t even mention that she has also just returned from a meeting with Matt Damon and David Beckham.

Leitah’s work with the Black Mambas has been a transformative experience, not just for South Africa’s wildlife and the communities she works with, but also for Leitah personally. Born and raised in a rural village, Leitah was surrounded by biodiversity, and close to the incredible wildlife of Kruger National Park. Nevertheless, as a child, she didn’t have the opportunity to see it for herself. “I would only see animals on TV and in books,” she says. “I dreamed of seeing those wild animals and going on a game drive, but because of our finances, my parents couldn’t afford it.” It wasn’t until she was 16 – when she participated in an educational programme that offered a rare opportunity to visit the Timbavati Nature Reserve – that Leitah first laid eyes on any of the “Big Five” (lions, leopards, rhinos, buffalos, and elephants). This experience was a turning point in her life. She saw these majestic animals in their natural habitat and learned about the devastating impact of poaching.

This experience ignited a passion for wildlife conservation and set her on a path that would eventually lead her to the Black Mambas. Leitah believes that a crucial step in conservation is making sure that African children have access to the wildlife around them. “When a child gets to see these animals at an early age, they understand the beauty of the animals, and that is both a lifelong and a multi-generational investment. When kids understand why animals are being poached, and why we have to protect them, they’ll be our future rangers.” Under Leitah’s leadership, the Black Mambas have achieved remarkable success, reducing poaching incursions, snaring, and the bushmeat trade. Their groundbreaking work has earned them numerous awards for their contributions to conservation and community empowerment.

Source: Spotlight 1/2025, pages 25-26 (adapted)

READING COMPREHENSION – CONTINUATION

Task: *Based on what you have read in the article, complete the statements below. You must fill in 1 or 2 words (the number of missing words is indicated). You have to use words from the article, or the forms derived from them. The statements do not follow in the same order as the information appears in the article.*

1. To accomplish conservation, African children should have access to.....
(1 word)
2. Leitah's participation in an educational programme was not only an eye-opener for her, but a(n)
..... in her life. (2 words)
3. Leitah became a leading personality in the first
unit. (2 words)
4. Leitah believes that exposing children to animals from their early childhood teaches them that it is
a(n) and responsibility. (2 words)
5. Instead of arms, the Black Mambas use and as
forms of prevention. (2 words)
6. For Leitah, having worked with the Black Mambas has meant a(n)
experience for her and her community. (1 word)
7. Women from Leitah's community have traditionally been and
..... role models for their families. (2 words)
8. Leitah and the Black Mambas have drawn the attention of
..... from all over the world. (2 words)
9. The Black Mambas decided to take action against poachers in a(n) way.
(1 word)
10. Leitah was brought up in a(n) environment. (1 word)

..... / 10 pts

V O C A B U L A R Y

Task 1: Replace the words in bold with phrasal verbs beginning with turn and one of the following prepositions: over, up, into, down, out.

1. His small idea **became** a major project.

His small idea a major project.

2. He shouldn't have **rejected** her proposal.

He shouldn't have her proposal.

..... / 2 pts

Task 2: Fill each blank space in the article below with the correct form of the word in capital letters.

Plain English

“Never use a long word where a short word will do.” The English writer George Orwell wrote this advice in one of his famous essays. To him, writing plainly was a moral issue.

In novels such as *Animal Farm*, Orwell presented big ideas about politics and truth with

such (3) that a primary-school aged child would be able to **SIMPLE**

understand them. In his view, clear and (4) language promotes **CONCISION**

sharper thinking and (5) the individual. “The sheer **POWER**

number of documents that are unclear, verbose, and (6) **NECESSARY**

complicated never ceases to amaze me,” says Tony Maher, who manages *Britain's*

Plain English Campaign. If people find what they are reading hard to understand, they

are more likely “to (7) the writer and the services they **TRUST**

offer.” The campaign's website includes a highly entertaining “Before and after”

section. Were you aware, for example, that “high-quality learning environments

are a basic precondition for the (8) and **FACILITATE,**

..... (9) of the ongoing learning process?” Put simply: **ENHANCE**

Children need good schools if they are to learn properly. Sometimes, we

follow (10) rules. Contrary to what many children **DATE**

are taught in schools, it isn't wrong to start a sentence with “And ...” or “Because ...”.

..... / 8 pts

..... / 10 pts

GRAMMAR

Task 1: Fill each of the numbered blanks in the passage with one suitable word, which should only serve a grammatical function in the text.

Welcome to Winter Wonderland!

A heavy snowfall overnight and we wake 1. _____ to a winter wonderland. There's a fresh blanket of snow everywhere. The frosty trees and frozen ponds glisten in the low winter sun. Snowflakes are falling and swirling in the air, 2. _____ one unique. It's a picture of perfection, 3. _____ a snow globe... until the first footprints and tyre tracks destroy the image. Children come 4. _____ to catch the snowflakes on their tongues, make snowmen, and throw snowballs. Meanwhile, the adults go outside with a snow shovel 5. _____ clear the paths. If the snow 6. _____ blown into snowdrifts, people can be snowed in, unable to leave their homes. If the snow continues and the wind increases, 7. _____ may be a snowstorm, or blizzard. When temperatures rise 8. _____ zero, the snow melts and turns to grey slush. If 9. _____ refreezes as temperatures drop again, black ice will make the snow slippery. Cars skid 10. _____ of control and people slip and fall on icy paths. Long icicles form on houses, then melt and drip down. Rain and snow fall, mixed together 11. _____ sleet. Suddenly, the snowy weather 12. _____ so much fun 13. _____ more.

(Adapted from Spotlight, 1/25, p. 57)

..... / 13 pts

Task 2: Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it means exactly the same as the sentence above it.

14. Their boss is making them work hard.

They are

15. I am sorry now that I left her.

Now I wish

..... / 2 pts

..... /15 pts

LISTENING**SIMONE JELLEY – EDIBLE-FLOWER FARMER**

You will hear Simone Jelley talking about her edible-flower farming. Decide if the following statements are true (T), false (F), or if the information was not given (NG). Underline the correct answer. You will hear the recording twice.

1. **T / F / NG** Simone Jelley's trigger for starting her new career in farming was the fact that she became unemployed.
2. **T / F / NG** Simone's customers include professionals in catering located in Australia.
3. **T / F / NG** Simone divides her working time proportionally among watering, transplanting, mulching, and pressing edible flowers.
4. **T / F / NG** One of the edible flowers – calendula – is often used by pharmacists because of its healing effects.
5. **T / F / NG** Creating pressed-flower serving boards is connected with her former artistic career.

..... / 5 pts

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